

## Maina Gielgud

British born, Maina Gielgud began ballet lessons in England with teachers including Tamara Karsavina until, at the age of 12, she moved to France, where her teachers included Rosella Hightower. She first danced professionally with Roland Petit, the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas, Rosella Hightower and the Grand Ballet Classique de France. She spent four years with Maurice Bejart's Ballet of the Twentieth Century, during which time she created several ballets.

Maina joined London Festival (now English National) Ballet as a Principal Artist in 1972. During her four years there her repertoire included Swan Lake, Giselle, The Sleeping Beauty, Don Quixote, The Nutcracker and Le Baiser de la Fée, which was created for her. In 1976 she joined The Royal Ballet's touring company, now Birmingham Royal Ballet, as a guest artist before joining as a Principal Artist in 1977. With this Company her roles included the Black Queen in Checkmate, the Siren in Prodigal Son, Swanilda in Coppélia and the Gypsy Girl in The Two Pigeons.

From 1977 Maina's career as a freelance dancer took her to Hungary, France, Germany, America, Belgium and Australia. She continued to dance until 1981 when she retired from dancing and became Rehearsal Director of London City Ballet.

In the years 1975-1981 she was the guest artist with the following companies:

- Ballet Grand Ballet Theatre de Nancy
- Ballet du XXme Siecle Maurice Bejart
- The Australian Ballet
- Sadlers Wells Royal Ballet
- Scottish Ballet
- CAPAB, Cape Town
- PACT Ballet, Johannesburg
- Hungarian State Ballet
- Bucarest Opera
- Ballet Nacional de Cuba
- de l'Opera de Marseille

In 1983, she was appointed Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet. During her 14 years there she introduced over 40 classical and modern works to the Company's repertoire. In 1992, at Government House, Melbourne, she was appointed an Honourary Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia in recognition of her contribution to the performing arts, and particularly ballet. She has also been the recipient of an Advance Australia award.

From 1997 to 1999 Maina was Artistic Director of The Royal Danish Ballet, where she brought many new works to the company. Since 1999, Maina has been freelance and has taught, coached and staged works for several different companies including English National Ballet, Bejart Ballet Lausanne, Tokyo Ballet, and Ballet du Rhin.

In August 2008 she will perform her farewell to dancing in The Exquisite Hour at the Theatre Royal in Sydney, Australia. This piece was reworked extensively by Maurice Bejart, specifically for Maina.